



QUESTION and ANSWER FACT SHEET

Washington State Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) 2010

Q: What is the focus of the Healthy Youth Survey (HYS)?

A: The HYS focuses on health risk behaviors, such as violence and alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use, that can result in injury and impact positive development among youth. The survey also includes questions about risk and protective factors, which are attitudes and opinions that research has shown to be correlated with these health risk behaviors. A list of the survey questions was sent with the registration packet.

Q: Why is the survey conducted?

A: The survey is used to identify and monitor factors that affect the health of youth in Washington. Similar school-based youth surveys were conducted across the state in 1988, 1990, 1992, 1995, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2008. Survey results can indicate changes in health behaviors over time and schools can use the results to identify important areas of need.

Q: Which schools are allowed to participate?

A: Any Washington public school with students in Grades 6, 8, 10, or 12 is eligible to participate.

Q: Does my school have to participate?

A: School participation in the survey is voluntary.

Q: Why should my school participate?

A: This survey provides important information about students in Washington which can be used to guide school policy and programs. Each school will receive a summary of its results (provided that student anonymity is protected by having at least 15 valid surveys completed per given grade level). Statewide results are also included for comparison. Schools decide whether or not to receive their results at the time they register to participate. School building and district results are provided to the district superintendent for release.

This information is provided at no cost to the schools for the Healthy Youth Survey 2010.

The survey also provides very useful data to state agencies, county prevention coordinators, community mobilization coalitions, community public health and safety networks, and others so they can support students and school programs.

Q: Are sensitive questions asked?

A: The survey includes questions related to unintentional and intentional injuries; physical activity and dietary behaviors; alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use; and related risk and protective factors. Unless questions in these topic areas are asked honestly and straightforwardly, we cannot know the degree to which Washington's youth engage in these health risk behaviors.

An optional version of the survey for grades 8, 10 and 12 includes four questions about sexual behavior. Schools, however, can opt to administer a version of the survey that does not include the sexual behavior questions. Also, relatively sensitive questions about family relationships, harassment, dating violence, and abuse history, as well as sexual behavior, are included on a separate page that schools can choose to remove. The survey administered to Grade 6 students does not include the sexual behavior questions.

Q: Is student participation voluntary? Are answers anonymous?

A: Student participation is completely voluntary and anonymous. The administration procedures are designed to protect student privacy and anonymity. Students are not asked for their names or identification numbers. When they finish the survey, students place their completed survey answer sheets in an envelope with no personal identifiers. The envelope of completed answer sheets is then sealed and shipped to the contractor for optical scanning and analysis. Schools must plan an alternative activity for students who elect to participate in it rather than complete the survey.

Q: How is the survey coordinated at each school?

A: Each participating school has a designated survey coordinator and a backup coordinator, and each school district or ESD has a central coordinator to help organize local survey efforts. These persons have additional information about the survey, including administration instructions.

Q: Can I review the survey?

A: Yes, a copy of the survey will be sent with the survey administration materials and should be made available to school staff and parents in the office of each school.

Q: How long does it take to complete the survey?

A: One class period is needed to complete the survey (about 40 to 50 minutes). All questions are self-report and no physical tests or examinations are involved.

Q: Do students answer the questions truthfully?

A: Both national research and experience in Washington indicate that the data collected are accurate when students are informed of the importance of survey and their responses are completely anonymous. Internal reliability checks are also used to help identify surveys that obviously have been answered carelessly and these surveys are not included in the results. In addition, students always have the option of not answering questions to which they do not feel comfortable responding.

Q: When is the survey conducted? When are results available?

A: The survey will be administered during the week of October 18–22, 2010. Results will be available in mid-March 2011.

Q: How does the HYS 2010 compare to surveys that have been administered in the past?

- A: The HYS 2010 will be very similar to HYS 2002, 2004, 2006, and 2008. The HYS combines two surveys used before 2002, the Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior (WSSAHB) and the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). In the past, to accommodate a large number of items, we have had two versions of the questionnaire for Grades 8, 10 and 12, called Form A and Form B. Because the sexual behavior questions are new in 2010, we are including an additional form, Form NS. Form NS is an alternative version of form B that does not include the sexual behavior questions, so that if schools do not wish to ask these questions they can still participate without having to remove the optional tear-off page. Form A will be interleaved with either Form B or Form NS before they are sent to the schools so that when they are passed out every other student will receive a different form. These forms have a core set of 34 identical items.

The last page on each form is a perforated answer sheet. Questions that are potentially sensitive are also on a perforated page (the second to last page), although they are important for planning and evaluating programs that serve youth. Schools must make the decision whether to remove the perforated page of questions prior to survey administration. All students in Grade 6 receive a shorter questionnaire, Form C.

Q: How can I find out which schools have registered to participate in the HYS 2010?

- A: You can visit the HYS 2010 web site (www.hys.wa.gov) to check on school registration and to look up school codes needed to complete the registration form.

Q: How will the survey results be used?

- A: Information from the Washington State HYS can be used to meet a variety of needs at the school, community, and state levels. The survey provides information that can be used to identify the importance of various health risk behaviors. This information can inform resource and policy decisions, such as how to target interventions. Those who receive the survey results may choose to share them with other community organizations.

The items that were asked in previous years can be used to identify trends or changes in the patterns of behavior over time. The state-level data can be used to compare Washington results to the results from other states that conduct similar surveys and to national results.

Legitimate researchers and educational and health officials will have access to the data. At the state and federal levels, a variety of interests are competing for limited resources and the results of this survey can be and have been used to provide evidence for the high priority of the important issues identified.

Q: Who sponsors the survey?

- A: The Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI); the Department of Health (DOH); the Department of Social and Health Services' Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR); the Department of Commerce (Commerce); the Family Policy Council (FPC), and the Washington State Liquor Control Board (LCB).

Q: Where can I get more information about the survey?

- A: The following is a list of contact persons who will be happy to answer questions and web sites where you can find out more about the survey:

Eric Einspruch, RMC Research Corporation (800) 788-1887

Kevin Beck, DOH	(877) HYS-7111
Dixie Grunenfelder, OSPI	(360) 725-6045
Steve Smothers, DBHR	(360) 725-3767
Ramona Leber, Commerce	(360) 725-3033
Dario Longhi, FPC	(360) 902-0986
(TBD), LCB	(360) 664-1771

<http://www.hys.wa.gov>

<https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/hys>

<http://www.ask.HYS.net>